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his note on the order Rhipiptera, (Gen. Col. Europe, 3,419), published subsequently to my work on Classification.

I will, however, answer briefly the questions asked by Dr. Gerstaecker in the passage above cited.

The characters common to a Strepsipteron and various Coleoptera are these :
 1. Hypermetamorphosis of the larva, (Meloidæ); 2. Parasitism, (Rhipidius);
 3. Retention of the Pupa within the skin of the larva, (Lampyridæ, tribe Lycini, genus Calopteron); 4. Unfitness of anterior wings for flight, (a character also found in Orthoptera and Hemiptera, which, however, have no metamorphosis);
 5. Large development of metathoracic segment.

Even if the Stylopidae are considered as a distinct order—Strepsiptera—it will be necessary to place them immediately after the Coleoptera.

In view of the great variation of characters found in Coleoptera, it would seem rational to consider Stylopidae as an extreme and degraded form of that order, rather than to regard such a small number of objects, closely related in form, structure and habits, as an equivalent to the great orders Coleoptera, Orthoptera and Hemiptera, with which alone they can be morphologically compared, (characters 4 and 5).

The information given by Dr. Gerstaecker regarding the difference in food and manner of life between the larvæ of Meloidæ and Stylopidae, though not original, is doubtless quite interesting, but seems to imply that I had compared them together, which is not correct.

Mr. Cassin called the attention of the Academy to the collection of birds presented this evening by the Smithsonian Institution, and particularly referred to several species of great rarity and scientific value. The *Didunculus strigirostris* is one of two species of birds now known to be approaching extinction, the other species being *Alca impennis*, which is also in the Academy Museum. This bird is the most nearly allied to the extinct Dodo, formerly of the Isle of France, and inhabits the Samoan or Navigator Islands. Its extinction or approach to it is said to be owing to the introduction into those islands of the domestic cat. Not more than four or five specimens are known to be extant.

Other little known types were pointed out and exhibited to the Academy, such as *Carpophaga Auroræ*, *Carpophaga latrans*, *Artamus mentalis* and others. This interesting series is from the collection of the United States Exploring Expedition of the Vincennes and Peacock, and is presented to the Academy by the Smithsonian Institution.

March 22d.

Vice-President BRIDGES in the Chair.

Seventeen members present.

The following were presented for publication :

"Critical Remarks on the Genera *Sebastes* and *Sebastodes*," and
 "Second Contribution to the Selacology of California." By Theo. Gill.

"A Critical review of the Family Procellariidæ; Part I." By E. Coues, M. D.

"Thoughts on the Influence of Ether on the Solar System; Part IV." By Alex. Wilcocks, M. D.

March 29th.

Vice-President BRIDGES in the Chair.

Seventeen members present.

[March

On report of the respective committees, the following were ordered to be published :—

Additions to the Catalogue of STARS which have Changed their Colors ; or which have appeared with different Colors at different times.*

BY JACOB ENNIS.

Sirius.—On the re-appearance of this star during the months of November and December, 1863, I very carefully watched its color. Its decided change of appearance since the early part of the year greatly interested me. Instead of a full bright green, it was of a pale yellowish green. During those two months the atmosphere passed through the extremes of variability, but the pale yellowish green of Sirius remained constant. On the 29th of December I asked Dr. Wilcocks, the discoverer of its being purple three years ago, how Sirius appeared to him now? Without knowing my opinion, and without any hesitation, he answered, "It is not as green as it was when visible last winter." This coincidence of his views with my own confirms the idea that he was not mistaken three years ago, as he since supposed, when he regarded the color of Sirius to be violet. According to these evidences this great star has had five distinct colors: red during the ancient times; white in 1850, and subsequently; violet in 1861; full green in the autumn and winter of 1862—3; pale yellowish green in November and December of 1863.

Note of April 19th, 1864. The above observations were written early in January. For the last three or four weeks the green color of Sirius has again been tinged with blue; but this evening no blue is visible, and the yellow mingled with the green is conspicuous. In this I am confirmed by a member of the Academy whose powers of observation are remarkably good. The clearness of the atmosphere is perfect, but the moon is large and bright, and I have a suspicion that the yellow of Sirius, though in a different quarter of the heavens, may be due to the moon's reflected rays. The following portions of this paper, except that on No. 21, were written previous to the 10th of November, 1863, at which date they were presented.

Altair and Deneb, or Alpha Cygni.—The former of these stars was described by Humboldt in 1850 as yellow and the latter as white. They were numbered 18 and 19 in this Catalogue, and announced to be blue in June, 1863. I had watched them for several months nearly every clear night, and, on the 20th of August, I first noticed that they were green. On all good nights since then they have appeared to myself and to others, whose opinions I have solicited, to be conspicuously green; but on damp, slightly hazy nights, from the effects of the atmosphere, they appear blue. It is rather oppressive for me to make this announcement, for I have been obliged already, in a former communication, to say that two other large stars, Sirius and Vega, had changed from blue to green. Certainly this change does not arise from any peculiarities of vision, for I have in all cases carefully consulted the views of others and found them to accord with my own. I know not how to attribute the change to atmospheric causes, for I had observed them all, except Sirius, to be blue several months before, in all weathers.

Vega.—For the last four or five weeks, this star has not appeared to me as green as during last summer. Its rather bluish appearance may, perhaps, be attributed to greater haziness of the atmosphere.

Castor.—See No. 10 of this Catalogue. In addition to the colors already given, the two companions of this double star have been described as follows: Yellow and yellowish by Sestini; greenish yellow and green by Dembowski;

* See these Proceedings for 1863, pp. 26, 96, 159.